

RESEARCH VESSEL CAPTAIN

This is skilled and supervisory work in the operation of the Research Vessels Carolina Coast, Long Bay, Rose Bay II or Machapunga.

Employees in this class serve as Captain of the vessel with responsibilities for planning cruises in cooperation with Marine Biologists, assuring that the vessel is in sea-worthy condition and that fishing gear or cultch/reef materials have been prepared and loaded, according to program needs. The Captain is also responsible for the safe operation of the vessel and the safety of employees and passengers on board. Work is performed under the general supervision of a Marine Biologist in charge of research conducted on-board the vessel and is evaluated through review of the condition of the vessel, the readiness of fishing gear and other equipment and its safe and effective operation. Work may include other duties as assigned.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity of Work - Work requires considerable knowledge of fishing techniques and equipment used aboard commercial fishing vessels. Employees must be skilled in ship handling and the use of navigational techniques including standard and electronic navigational devices. Work also requires knowledge of both Inland and International Rules of the Road as well as knowledge of the sea, weather and local waters sufficient to operate the vessel in both marked and unmarked waters and the open ocean.

Intricacy of Work - Work requires the operation of the research vessel in fairly shallow and unmarked waters and the open ocean. Work may also require the maneuvering of the research vessel in fairly confined waters marked by temporary floats as designated by the Marine Biologist. Off shore operations require precise navigation in order to reach the exact locations of shellfish beds or artificial reef sites.

Controls Over Work - Marine Biologists provide the nature and destination of the cruise. With these minimal instructions, the Captain is required to plan the cruise and ready the boat and necessary equipment. Daily operation of and responsibility for the research vessel and crew are independent of direct supervision.

Judgmental Demands - Work requires diagnosis of weather and sea conditions in order to select the safest and most feasible cruise plan that will meet the needs of the Marine Biologist. Employees must continually monitor these conditions and modify the plan as necessary. Employees must continually monitor these conditions and modify the plan as necessary. Employees must also be capable of making quick decisions on vessel operation in times of crisis such as inclement weather and/or equipment breakdown.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Potential - Improper operation of the research vessel could result in damage to or loss of the vessel and its gear. Improper operation could also result in damage or loss of any other property with which it might collide. Negligence could also result in injuries to other employees or passengers which could result either in disability or death. Improper operation could also affect the success of the research project.

Care and Attention - Upon receipt of general instructions as to the purpose and destination of cruises, the Captain must assume that all needed equipment and supplies are on the boat before departure. Navigation must be precise to prevent running aground or missing destinations.

III. PHYSICAL EFFORT:

Intensity of Effort - Light hand and arm work is required while piloting the boat. Medium hand and arm work is required while repairing or constructing fishing equipment. Employees must use ladders to climb from one deck to another and occasionally when boarding ship.

Frequency and Duration - Cruise lengths vary from eight to sixteen hours per day, one to five days at a time. Due to the length of the cruises, effort is exerted on a prolonged basis but usually results in little strain. Greater physical effort is required when operating in confined waters or inclement weather. Occasionally captains will assist others in maintenance and repair requiring physical effort of a higher level.

IV. WORK SURROUNDING AND HAZARDS:

Work Surroundings - Work is usually confined to the research vessel which operates in the North Carolina in-shore waters and the Atlantic Ocean. Occasionally the vessels are required to travel up and down the eastern coast. The Captain is also required to accompany and remain with the research vessel while in shipyard dry docks for major repairs and inspection. Operation of the research vessel exposes employees to inclement weather, rough seas, glare and extreme temperatures. When below decks, employees will be subject to noise, vibrations, fumes, oil, grease, steam and moving machinery when assisting others in repairs.

Hazardous Conditions - Employees are regularly exposed to inclement weather and rough seas which could create the potential for injury or death. Occasionally they may be exposed to unsafe conditions while assisting in the maintenance or repair of the research vessel and to moving equipment while loading or unloading the vessel.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities - Considerable knowledge of the various fishing techniques used on-board commercial fishing vessels, the use of fishing equipment, the fabrication and repair of fishing equipment, navigation, and the use of standard and electronic navigation devices. Considerable knowledge of local coastal waters and U.S. Coast Guard rules and regulations governing the operation of a vessel inland and offshore waters. Knowledge of the sea and weather, sufficient to safely direct the operation of a vessel on the open ocean. Skills in all phases of seamanship including command, navigation and first aid. Ability to plan voyages and plot courses. Ability to make quick decisions on vessel operations in times of crisis such as equipment breakdown and inclement weather. Ability to pilot a vessel in inclement weather and heavy seas.

Minimum Education and Experience - Completion of high school and sufficient experience in commercial fishing or other vessel work to be a master of a vessel similar to the research vessels operated by the State of North Carolina. Management prefers U.S. Coast Guard licensure for both inland and offshore waters.